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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that examined the factors that hinder or promote teachers in taking greater responsibility for their professional growth and decreasing their dependence on principals' instructional leadership. The paper explores the consequences of an inservice collaborative activity between the principal and teachers in one elementary school. The principal-researcher designed the workshop to encourage reflective practice among teachers and adopted a facilitative, nondirective, rather than instructional leadership style. Data were gathered through audio- and video-taped inservice sessions, interviews with the 17 participants, teachers' written responses to the videotapes, and pre- and post- questionnaires. An unanticipated outcome of the project was that when the principal failed to exhibit traditional leadership behaviors, teachers complained that the program lacked focus and direction. After the program ended, the principal adopted a more regulatory role in defining the school's vision, but encouraged shared leadership roles among faculty. A conclusion is that instructional leaders can provide structure and guidance that promote professional growth without reverting to a training posture. It is recommended that future research focus on how the principal's leadership is co-constructed among the leaders and followers; specifically, how does a teacher's attitude toward the principal as instructional leader affect the way in which that teacher learns from the principal? (Contains 33 references.) (LMI)

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The Principal As Instructional Leader: Inducement or Deterrent To Teachers' Personal Professional Growth?

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The Principal As Instructional Leader: Inducement or Deterrent To Teachers' Personal Professional Growth?

The role of the principal as instructional leader has been evolving over the past quarter century. Although the term was popularized as part of the effective schools movement (Edmonds, 1979, 1985; Smith & Andrews, 1989), the changing leadership role of the principal was at issue for some time before that movement took hold (Owens, 1970). In its earlier formation, the issue concerned moving from administrative management as a way of maintaining the organization of the school to administrative leadership as a means of promoting organizational change (Owens, 1970, p. 127). In the effective schools model, leadership is focused on instructional practice and its impact on student achievement. Within this model, the role of the instructional leader is to determine the appropriate mode of instruction, select the most effective materials to provide that instruction, provide a model for the application of those materials, and assess whether the model is being adequately implemented. "(S)trong instructional leaders have the capacity to mobilize available resources to implement policies that lead to desired outcomes.... Effective principals view resource provision in terms of maximizing instructional effectiveness and student achievement" (Smith & Andrews, 1989, p. 11).

The role of the principal as instructional leader is changing to include a greater concern for the growth and development of the teacher as professional. This change can be seen in studies that frame the principal's role in terms of stages of the teachers' development (Liethwood, 1990), and that emphasize the principal's role in creating a vision and establishing cultural norms for the school (McLaughlin, 1991). Concomitant with this changing role of the principal is an acceptance of reflective

practice and collegial interaction as critical factors in the professional growth of teachers. However, on a large scale, the control of the growth process still rests primarily with the instructional leader. The principal's actions can fall on continuum from those designed to enable the teacher to grow as a professional, to those that mandate changes in instructional methods and techniques, but do little to support professional growth.

There have been attempts to lessen administrative control and give more responsibility to the teacher. One approach comes from research on teacher leadership programs and the models that this research suggests (Carnagie, 1986; Lieberman, 1988; Shanker, 1990). Shanker's (1990) scenario of the role of the teacher in the restructured school of the future comes closest to a view of teachers as collegial professionals in that it incorporates an emphasis on the existing knowledge base, interaction with other professionals and continuous reflective inquiry as part of the regular teacher's school day. Unfortunately, much of what is described in his and other proposals for teacher leadership recasts the role of principal as instructional leader into the role of teacher as pseudo-principal. This constitutes more of a systemic change regarding who is in charge than a transformational change in the orientation of the teachers concerning how their own learning should take place in the school. Restructuring the school may succeed in creating an altered culture with different expectations for the role of the teacher. Yet, as Cooper (1988) points out, a culture that is formed by outside political and administrative influences may not be the culture that is sought by the individual teachers involved.

Glickman (1987, 1990) attempts to address the issue of the teacher's orientation to learning within a more traditional framework through a situational leadership

approach. In situational leadership, the level of direction provided by the supervisor is adjusted according to the perceived level of commitment and level of abstraction of the teacher. Ultimately, the function of supervision is to make the teacher independent.

> Supervision must shift decision making about instruction from external authority to internal control. As long as decisions are made by authorities away from those who teach, we will have dormant, unattractive work environments that will stymie the intellectual growth of teachers and the intellectual life of students (Glickman, 1990, p. 441).

Glickman (1990) also describes what he calls *developmental supervision*. Developmental supervision uses a directive posture with teachers who have an essentialist philosophy, meaning that they view the supervisor as the expert on instruction who should have the major control; a collaborative approach with teachers who are experimentalists–those who see teachers and supervisors as equal partners; and a nondirective approach with existentialist teachers, those who are capable of discovering their "own capacities for instructional improvement" (p. 92). Similar distinctions are applied to strategies for change. Change strategies can be either persuasive, reeducative or facilitative. Persuasive strategies should be used with groups that have little experience working together. This approach involves a high level of supervisory leadership and direct assistance provided in a directive and informational format. Reeducative strategies call for shared leadership and a collaborative approach to direct assistance. They should be used with a staff that has previously worked together. Facilitative strategies are best used with a staff that is experienced, highly committed and at a high level of abstraction. This approach utilizes teacher leadership and nondirective direct assistance from the supervisor (pp. 424-425).

As useful as these distinctions are, they are still the result of decisions made by the supervisor and maintain the control of the circumstances surrounding professional growth in the hands of the instructional leader. For teachers who are already self-directed the decision is clear-cut. However, Glickman (1990) offers little information about what would prompt an entire staff or an individual accustomed to at least some degree of direction and control by a supervisor to shift to exercising internal control and adopt a self-directed leadership role that would lead to personal professional growth in a nondirective setting. What might precipitate such a change?

In my role as principal, I decided to consider ways in which greater responsibility for professiona. growth could be vested in the teachers in my building. The material presented here was drawn from a study in which I attempted to create a situation that would promote self-directed learning on the part of the teachers within my school (Wiggins, 1993). One objective was to engage the teachers in an examination of their own work as a means of enhancing their professional growth. For the purposes of the study, these teachers agreed to become part of an in-service activity that was based on principles of high-quality staff development (Glickman, 1990; Griffin, 1983, 1987; Little, 1981; Rubin, 1987), that encouraged reflective practice (Clift, Houston & Pugach, 1990; Schön, 1987) and that stressed the importance of dialogue and interaction with colleagues (Palinscar, 1986; Rogoff, 1990). The goal of the study was to promote an increased understanding of the participants' own personal beliefs and philosophies about teaching and learning and the impact these beliefs and philosophies had on action in the classroom. In order for the learning to be self-directed, the in-service course had to be non-directive in nature. It also was designed to give colleagues in all positions on our teaching staff opportunities to share their

existing knowledge with each other and to examine their own work as professionals. Although I, as principal, was also a participant, I endeavored to be workshop facilitator rather than instructional leader. Whatever learning took place was to be the responsibility of the individual teachers.

This paper addresses one of the findings of this study. This particular group of teachers was experienced at working together and had exhibited a high level of commitment to each other that permeated the culture of the school. Based on the Glickman model, they should have benefitted from a facilitative, non-directive approach. This was not the case. They sought direction from me, as principal. A question that emerged from the data of this study was, under what circumstances would teachers be willing to take control of their own learning and not be dependent on the principal as instructional leader?

Method

This study was an action research study using techniques of qualitative research. The overall purpose of the study was to explore the consequences of an in-service activity in which the principal and teachers from one school worked together in a professional staff development experience. Models for this type of research in schools can be found in school improvement programs (Lieberman, 1986; Oja & Pine, 1987; Oja & Smulyan, 1989) and staff development efforts (Busher, Clarke & Taggart, 1989; Smulyan, 1987). In this case, I not only studied our work together, I also studied my work as a principal attempting to promote the growth of my teachers. With this in mind, I could take Hopkins' (1987) description of teacher research, "...teachers who have extended their role to include critical reflection of the craft with the aim of improving it" (p. 115), and substitute the term principal in that definition.

Participants

Seventeen teachers volunteered to be a part of this in-service experience. They were all teachers in my school – an elementary school of approximately 1000 students in grades 1-5. There was no selection process for the participants, yet, as it happened, they represented the staff as a whole in terms of age and experience. They were all female, every grade except fifth was represented, and the school librarian, a special education classroom teacher and a resource room teacher also agreed to participate. All of the participants were aware that they were part of a research study and that data would be collected in a number of forms throughout the study. Some of the teachers even expressed an interest in participating in the data analysis.

Procedures

The teachers participated in a 15 hour, one credit in-service course on the topic *Interaction in the Classroom*. The sessions examined that topic from a variety of research perspectives as well as considering practical issues relating to student-teacher interaction. The teachers videotaped themselves in their own classrooms both before and after the in-service course. These videotapes were not intended to be shared with anyone else. The teachers agreed to write responses to their videotapes after viewing them in private. During many of the course sessions, the group viewed videotapes of other teachers and classrooms. These experiences were intended to serve as a model for the teachers' reflections on their own videotapes and provide a scaffold from their existing knowledge to any new learning. In discussing these videotapes, the guiding questions were, what do you think is important to this teacher? and, what does it tell you about her beliefs about teaching and learning?

In addition to the written responses to their videotapes, the teachers all agreed to respond to pre- and post-workshop questionnaires. Each also took part in a semi-structured interview when the in-service course was completed. To protect the teachers anonymity and to encourage them to be honest and forthright in their comments, pseudonyms were used for all of the written material and the interviews.

Data Collections and Analysis

Data were collected from five different sources. Audiotapes and videotapes were made of all of the in-service course sessions. These were all transcribed. All of the interviews with the teachers were also transcribed. The teachers' written responses to their own videotapes formed the third source of data and the questionnaires were the fourth source. The final source of data was my own field notes that were in the form of journal entries.

The interpretation of the data involved reading and coding all of the transcripts and written material. As common themes began to emerge, the data was re-read and re-coded. During the course of data analysis, comparisons were made, not only among the data sources, but also among the different individuals to be certain any conclusions that were drawn were supported by multiple perspectives. Themes emerged concerning the value of videotaping and the constraints on reflection in the classroom. The data analysis also revealed issues pertaining to the teachers assessment of the in-service activity as a learning experience and the impact it had on their actions in the classroom. Throughout the analysis process, I was confronted with what appeared to be inconsistencies between the teachers' statements concerning how they felt about the experience and what they did in response to the experience. For example, most of the teachers felt that the in-service course was not

a significant learning experience for them, yet all of them stated that they would like to participate in a similar activity in the future. Although they felt they had "not learned anything," they made changes in what they did and, to a greater extent, how they interpreted their own actions in the classroom. Another inconsistency was the teachers feeling that videotaping themselves was a valuable part of the in-service experience, despite the apparent difficulty they had in responding to the videotapes. These issues are explored in depth elsewhere (Wiggins, 1994). Other issues involved the role of the principal as workshop facilitator, the need for focus and direction in the in-service course, the teachers' ability to study and reflect on their own teaching and the role of the principal as instructional leader. These issues will be dealt with in this paper.

Interpretation of the Data

The Role of the Principal as Workshop Facilitator

Teachers are accustomed to taking direction from the principal. Through formal means such as observations, conferences, written directives and grade level and faculty meetings, as well as through a myriad of informal contacts with teachers, building level administrators constantly present their ideas and objectives in a direct manner that is perceived as being authoritative, simply by virtue the position of the principal. However, presenting administrative ideas and objectives was counter to the goals of this study. In this study, it was important to minimize the directive nature of the principal's interactions with the teachers and to focus instead on what the teachers understood about their own beliefs and ideas about teaching. My opinion would be just one of many that would each stand or fall on their own merit. While I doubted that I would be able to function as just another participant, the greatest

amount of influence I wanted to assert was to act as a facilitator for the teachers. With this in mind, the first question that needed to be answered was, were we able to participate in a joint learning experience without being encumbered by the inherent power relationships?

All of the teachers reported that they were not concerned about participating in an in-service course with the principal. Jane's comment to me reflects the feeling of most of the participants.

> I think it was very different and I liked it. I also have to say about you that you are... You asked us at one point, or you mentioned something about were you an intimidating... You're absolutely... You're not intimidating as a principal, Bob. You're easy to talk to, you're easy to get along with, and you're not a didactic authority kind of person. So that you are not threatening, and I think people were very open and found it very easy to speak, so I think that was an asset also. (Jane, Interview, p. 13)

One participant reported that the involvement of the principal gave her an opportunity to confirm her sense that she was doing "the right thing.".

> I think it was good that he was involved. I think whether we want to realize it or not, we all have that feeling that if the principal doesn't agree with what we're doing, that something must be wrong with it, and I think having Bob involved again helped me to feel more comfortable with some of the things that I do. Even though I've wanted to do them that way, or I've felt they were right, if he disagreed, I wouldn't feel as comfortable as I do now. So I think it was good that he was involved. ("Hobie," Interview, p. 3)

Some teachers were comfortable ignoring the teacher-principal relationship,

> Actually, it shouldn't have been an asset at all, because the principal was supposed to, I shouldn't say pretend, but we were supposed to pretend he was not our principal and just conduct ourselves as if we were in another course. So as far as that making it an asset, no. Whatever was said in there wasn't supposed to go any further than there, anyway. ("Six," Interview, p. 4)

> I don't know if it was an asset but I think that it was different to sit and talk with him and listen to him in an informal way, as opposed to I'm the principal, you must do now what I say. He really was interested in people's opinions and it was nice to be in that kind of situation. ("None," Interview, p. 7)

while others felt that the role of the principal should have been to provide more direction.

> It would have been an asset if we learned some practical ...if we had more focus. It would have definitely been an asset if we could have grown, if we could have seen where we started from and our growth. Unfortunately, we left with more questions than when we started. ("Stevand," Interview, p. 5)

In contrast to "Stevand's" comment, growth did occur and the teachers documented that growth. There were differences in their responses to the pre- and post-questionnaires that indicated a change in the way the teachers conceptualized interaction in the classroom (Wiggins, 1994). The interviews also revealed changes in the teacher's practices in the classroom. One teacher made changes in the way she involves herself in classroom dis .ssion.

> I think, um... the whole concept of talking at kids. What is a discussion? Who is contributing? What are we listening to? How much dominating of it do I do? Sometimes during discussions I sit on a low chair in the back of the room so that I am not a focal point and I'm not a dominant person. I listen. In the past I didn't listen.
>
> I'm much more aware of it, and conscious of it. I'm very conscious of the focus and I'm conscious about listening and interactions. (Jane Interview, p. 10)

For most of the teachers, there was not such an obvious change in practice. One teacher saw it as more of an awareness.

> I think that it just helped me look at myself more closely and really analyze why I do things or what I've done. ("Diamond" interview, p. 1)

Another combined this awareness with a confirmation of things she was already doing.

> Not really to change, but to be more aware of the way I was doing things. A lot of what we talked about in the course I was already doing. ("Hobie," Interview, p. 1)

At least one teacher recognized that the change could be conceptual.

> Change to me can also mean looking at something a different way. Change can mean I have learned something, even if it's learning what I don't know. Or learning that I don't know something. (Janet, Interview, p. 10)

It is possible that the teachers did not recognize the growth they experienced because they have a very practical orientation (see Doyle & Ponder, 1977-78 and Wiggins, 1994). The changes they made were subtle and elusive because they were changes in thinking rather than changes in their actions. Typically changes in school involve change in practice. The teachers are accustomed to being told what to do and to being dependent on the instructional leader of the school to give that direction. When this was not the kind of growth they experienced they interpreted it as a lack of focus and direction.

Focus and Direction

Almost every teacher in the study commented in some form that they did not grasp the point of what we had been doing. To them it seemed that the workshop sessions lacked focus and direction. This perception contributed to the teachers' feelings that they had not learned anything from the workshops.

> I thought the seminars were unfocused. I really did not learn anything. ...did not seem to have any direction. ("Stevand," Interview, p. 1)

Some of the teachers would have preferred workshop sessions that provided something concrete that they could have immediately applied to their classrooms.

> I feel there should have been more structure to it, so that we could have learned techniques or ways of dealing with the children in our own room, instead of just having everything come from the class with no direction. ("Betty Boop," Interview, p. 1)

They also would have preferred clear definitions and descriptions of the concepts we discussed.

> I think if he really wanted us to learn more about interactive learning, if he'd said what he thought it was, and bounced off from there, and let people give their opinions, that might have been ...I still don't know what that is, per say. He left it up to people to supply their own answers. And even when you did, you're still not sure if you know what he's talking about. ("None," Interview, p. 7)

At least one teacher would have preferred a highly structured setting with very clear guidelines.

> Number one, there has to be an objective for each class, just the way when we teach a lesson, we're expected to have objectives for everything that we teach. If an administrator, or any adult; teaches anything, the first thing you do is say, what do I want to teach? You must have your objective. How am I going to go about doing that? Discussion can only go so far. There was no closure on it. We discussed, and we discussed and we discussed until we were blue in the face, and then what, so what? Has to be objectives, has to have closure, direction, it has to be more related to the classroom environment, that's about it. ("Stevand," Interview, p. 8)

Yet, to provide a highly structured setting and clearly stated objectives would have been contrary to the purpose of the in-service experience. It was important that I, as principal, did not dominate the workshops. Therefore, I kept the sessions intentionally unstructured. It was important for the teachers to decide for themselves which aspect of the experience was meaningful and useful. Therefore, I provided content material, but not specific objectives for how that material was to be used by the teachers. I made an assumption that the teachers would take

responsibility for their own learning, form individual interpretations of the content material and make the connections to their own work in whatever way they deemed appropriate. I wanted the participants to arrive at their own conclusions. I was open to changing the topic or amending the format but the teachers did not see it as their prerogative to suggest any changes. Unintentionally, I had provided just enough direction to maintain control, but not enough to adequately set the course.

> It's not even that you wanted to give us something to learn, but you provided the framework. You provided the reading materials, you provided the videos, you provided the subject we started off with, but then we never really went anywhere and we didn't even know why we were doing that.
>
> So, it had to come from you because you... In other words, it was as if you took a little bit of the responsibility and then, I think many of us felt that we were floundering, because we had no idea where we were going, or what the point was, or why we were even talking about what we were talking about. ("Jane," Interview, p. 4)

I had selected a topic for each of the ten workshop sessions and provided readings for five. For the sessions in which there were no readings, I began by sharing information from personal experience or used a chart that summarized a relevant field of research. I also selected videotapes for each session. In three sessions we did never got to the videotapes because we were so involved in discussion. I was comfortable with the shift in direction and welcomed any effort on the part of the teachers to set a new direction. They saw those shifts in direction as tangents.

> I think it needed... I don't know...focus is the wrong word, but I think sometimes we really got off on tangents, and kind of went to a lot of different places, and as valuable as the information could be, I don't know, sometimes I think we missed the point in places. ("Diamond," Interview, p. 4)

At the outset of the first workshop, I informed the participants that my role as workshop leader would be to provide the content information for each session, as needed. The group was free to determine the focus and direction of our discussions. However, the teachers seemed to see an element of control in the content materials I selected for the course.

There appears to be a delicate balance between too much control and not enough direction. There is also a potential conflict. Jane makes the point that, in her view, providing this direction in even a small way, is what prevented the teachers from taking over more control of their own learning.

> I feel, if you had come to us and said, "These are some issues that I think I'd like to discuss. I need your input. If you don't want to talk about them, if you have something else you'd like to talk about..." In other words, set a stage so that we could participate but... When we arrived we were given readings, there were a couple of videos, there was discussion for three weeks about this thing...the words, and...we didn't have any sense that it was up to us to participate, change the focus, or whatever. I mean, you came with a lot of stuff, and we didn't know how to play the game, because we didn't know where the ball was. ("Jane," Interview, pp. 6-7)

The word "participate" is key. There is at least some indication the teachers expected to be passive recipients. This is a paradox if teachers are to take charge of their own learning. On the one hand, it is important for the workshop presenter to be focused and clear. On the other, if the workshop presenter is too structured, the participants might not see it as their role to have any control over the process. This might have had an impact on the teachers' ability to study their own teaching.

Reflecting on Their Own Teaching

Before beginning this study I anticipated that the teachers would experience some impediments to reflecting on their own teaching. In the follow-up interviews they identified time limitations, the constantly changing classroom circumstances

and difficulty focusing on individual students and situations as being constraints on reflection. In addition, the teachers initially wrote only brief responses to viewing their videotapes and wrote even less after participating in the in-service course.

The teachers videotaped themselves for the first time before the in-service course began. They were intentionally given no guidance and asked to respond in whatever way they chose. As might be expected, the responses to the first videotapes were practical reports of what happened in the classroom. The teachers focused on classroom management, lesson objectives, pacing and student participation – all traditional elements of an observation/evaluation frame of mind.

The second videotape was made after the conclusion of the in-service course. In viewing this tape, the teachers were asked to use two questions to guide them: what seems to be most important to the teacher? and how does it reflect the teacher's beliefs about teaching and learning? Their attempts to do this were relatively unproductive. The written responses to the second tape were short and sketchy with a number of participants handing in nothing at all. Many of the teachers asked me for specific direction with questions on what they should look for, how they would recognize it and how they should "write it up."

My expectation was that experienced teachers would have some basis of their own for analyzing and reacting to their own work. Instead, they were dependent on me to tell them how to respond. The strength of this dependency can be seen in Janet's comment to me.

> It would have been more helpful to me if after you realized my constant frustration because I did verbalize it. If you would have said to me, Janet this is what it is. I see you struggling, and after a while it did me no good to struggle any more. It would have... If you saw that I really

> wanted to learn, or wanted to absorb or use an idea, because that's just the way I am, maybe on your part understanding, okay this is the way Janet truly is. And she needs more information, because she is willing to try it. Is willing to see if she can do something, or if she's already doing it. She does want to learn. (Janet, Interview, p. 37)

Despite this frustration, almost all of the teachers indicated that videotaping themselves was the most valuable part of the experience. However, if we return to Glickman's (1990) proposal that we should take a non-directive, facilitative stance with experienced, committed teachers, we must ask ourselves how these staff members are to develop the tools they need to benefit from this approach. If they are accustomed to relying on the principal to function as the instructional leader, they may have great difficulty making the transition to self-direction.

The Role of the Principal as Instructional Leader

I have always believed that my role as principal need not be authoritarian. However, participation in this study has taught me that when my role is not authoritarian the resulting circumstances may be unproductive. I came to understand the importance of focus and direction to my teachers as a group. The autonomy teachers have as decision makers in their classrooms does not automatically extend to a group setting. On the contrary, there are attributes of the role of the principal that continually contradict the teacher's sense of autonomy. I readily accepted the idea that the role of the principal exists as much in the minds of the school staff as it does in the actions of the individual. I found it harder to understand how firmly these notions are retained by the staff even when these notions are counterintuitive. In this study situation, all of my actions were seen as leadership behaviors regardless of their intent or function. From the teachers perspective, I had not made my intentions clear. When I did not exhibit traditional leadership behaviors, a void was created. I expected the teachers to fill that void

naturally, yet I did little to convey that expectation to the participants. As a result, the teachers were confused about where leadership and direction should come from. I wanted to guard against creating a forced collaboration that would have had the potential to be artificial and would have represented a continuation of my leadership and control (Cooper, 1988). As a result, I created a learning experience that seemed to have little focus or direction.

Although a lack of focus and direction was an issue in this study, it does not follow that this would be so in any situation where the teachers are encouraged to take charge of their own learning. The topic that was chosen for this in-service course was intentionally not controversial and the information provided was not specific to a perceived classroom need or school-wide problem. What would have been the outcome had we ventured into a topic that was more politically charged or that had personal significance to one or more of the participants? Would an individual teacher have attempted to fill the leadership void? Would they have taken responsibility as a group? That is what happened with subsequent staff development experiences in our school that arose from identified building needs and had the personal commitment of individual teachers (Wiggins, 1994). There is a need for teachers to find within themselves the source of their own professional growth.

Based on these experiences, I am convinced that it is possible for instructional leaders to provide structure and guidance that promotes professional growth without reverting to a training posture. If we examine the aspects of this experience that were meaningful to the teachers interacting with their fellow staff members, making personal videotapes of their own teaching, and sharing and learning alongside the building principal) we find that these attributes are too often absent from traditional

forms of in-service. These are the components that should be expanded and enhanced to create a culture in the school that supports a community of learners.

We should avoid in-service that is leader-directed with the workshop leader taking more control. Personal professional growth for teachers will only come from giving individual teachers more control of their own learning. By choosing an in-service format that too closely resembled a leader-dominated learning experience, I inhibited this group of teachers. Despite my knowledge of this particular group and our prior experiences, I did not give them enough credit for being willing and able to proceed unimpeded.

Instructional Leadership and Personal Professional Growth

A misdirected emphasis on principal as instructional leader may contradict current interest in developing a higher level of professionalism on the part of teachers. The instructional leadership of the principal became an issue in this study. In the workshop sessions, the lack of a specific focus was by design. The intention was to enable the teachers to take charge and set the direction of their own learning. This did not happen. The teachers expected direction and were frustrated when it was not provided. They were willing to accept and, in some cases, even requested much more authority on my part as principal. They sought definitive answers to the questions we were raising. It seemed that these teachers were not accustomed to thinking about their work in terms of their own personal professional growth. Their realm of experience regarding in-service activities had to do with understanding the content to which they had been exposed and assessing how it impacts on their classrooms.

There is a need for instructional leadership in a school. There are organizational and management responsibilities that must be attended to even when the norm for

the school includes extensive collaboration. There may even be times when determining policy and setting goals should be the sole prerogative of the school leader. However, that leadership should not negate the importance of the continued personal professional growth of the teaching staff. Leadership should not be based entirely on providing answers and direction from a source outside of the teacher. Instructional leadership should encourage teachers to expand their own knowledge base and to come to a better understanding of their own conceptualization of teaching.

Implications for Research

The reaction of the teachers in this study to changes in the leadership norms of our school has led me to conclude that what is needed is further research on how teachers perceive instructional leadership. The next phase of research into the changing role of principal as instructional leader should not focus on *who* should have the leadership role in the school, but on *how* that leadership is co-constructed among the leaders and the followers. One question that would need to be answered is, in what way does a teacher's attitudes and views on the principal as instructional leader affect the way in which that teacher learns from the principal? This is a substantially different question from one which assesses the teacher's perception of the principal's effectiveness as an instructional leader or one which asks what leadership responsibilities should be delegated to the teacher.

Over the past ten years in my school, we have been moving from an autocratic to a more democratic approach. Teachers have been involved in a form of school improvement planning and shared decision making that is constantly evolving. We have seen an increase of participation on school committees, all of which are chaired

by teachers. In my attempt to change the leadership norms for this in-service course, I assumed that our past experiences implied that we would have a great deal of individual leadership on the part of the participants. This was not the case, perhaps, because democracy does not promote individual leadership. In a democracy, the individual agrees to endorse the leadership decisions of a representative group. This does not mean that the individual is any better prepared to take charge in a group decision making situation. Future research should make a distinction between attempts at collaboration/consensus building and issues of individual leadership.

We must also keep in mind in preparing future research projects, that no group of teachers is monolithic regardless of how strong the culture of the school appears to be. Therefore, when we emphasize the importance of a common vision (Liethwood, 1990; McLaughlin, 1991) we must also recognize that there are many individual interpretations of what that vision means. Again, the teacher's personal perspectives must form an important point of inquiry in future research.

I envision research of this nature being framed as collaborative action research, utilizing qualitative techniques, with the teacher researching her own work with the help of a participant observer who might be a university researcher but, could also be another teacher. To be meaningful, the research should involve a number of teachers or teacher teams so that a comparison could be made regarding how different teachers' perspectives on leadership affect their learning. Such research need not be limited to the relationship between principal and teacher. Other questions that could be addressed would concern how teachers' attitudes and views affect their ability to learn from an in-service experience, how they promote or inhibit learning in collegial settings, and how they impact on the teacher's willingness to participate in and

benefit from collaborative forms of supervision. Regardless of the nature of the experience, we need to examine instructional leadership in terms of what it means to the recipient.

Implications for Practice

This new line of research should not be designed to produce a substitute for instructional leadership on the part of the principal. There is a need for a leader in any organization and, at least at present, that role falls primarily to the school principal. When I attempted to abdicate the leadership role in this in-service course without imposing it on anyone else in the group, the outcome was not productive. From the actions of the teachers, it was clear that they superimposed a leadership relationship where one was not intended and interpreted my efforts to facilitate as efforts to establish norms, provide a vision and set direction for how we should proceed. However, there are indications that changes in the current practices of both teachers and administrators may result in changes in the mystique that surrounds instructional leadership.

Practices of the Teachers. The aspect of the study the participants identified as most beneficial was the opportunity to spend time together and learn from one another. This would seem to imply that future in-service activities in our school could be more traditional in nature provided these activities are enhanced through the opportunity for extensive sharing with colleagues within the school. Based on the data analysis, I feel that, in our school, we need to look beyond our customary staff development practices. In the school year before the study took place, 43 staff members in the building were enrolled in 206 in-service courses. This was an average of 4.8 courses each, for almost 72 hours of instruction per teacher. No doubt many of

these courses were valuable and useful. Yet none of them had the building-wide impact that occurred with the study workshops and the activities that followed them.

This study has led me to believe that, for our purposes, staff development should be in-house. We should include as many staff members as possible and they should have as much direct contact with one another as possible. It is not just a matter of exposing the entire staff to the same information, methods or techniques over a period of time. They need to share the experience and be able to interact with one another as they form and transform their ideas. There is a growing emphasis on reflection that takes many forms in the pre-service training of teachers. As these teachers enter the field, we need to continue the practice such that it becomes the norm for experienced teachers as well. Teachers at all levels should be encouraged to ask themselves questions such as: "How does what I am learning fit with my personal beliefs about teaching and learning?" "When I utilize this technique in the classroom, is it consistent with what I believe?" "If I had to, could I articulate my own beliefs about teaching?" "What things can I point to in my teaching that reflect my personal beliefs?" Asking questions like these causes teachers to look at their own work in a different way and to scrutinize it for more than the skills they have as technicians. Having answers to these questions that continually evolve is what constitutes professionalism.

Practices of the Principal. The results of this study are consistent with approaches to leadership suggested by Sergiovanni (1987). This learning experience would have benefitted from what Sergiovanni refers to as leadership by purpose – providing a shared meaning that brings clarity and commitment to the work of the group.

> Purposing is a powerful force because of our need for some sense of what is important and some signal of what is of value. This force is particularly important within the context of work. We want to know what is of value, and we want a sense of order and direction: we enjoy sharing this sense with others. (Sergiovanni, 1987, p. 121)

In response to the teachers' concern with a lack of focus and direction to our efforts during the workshop sessions, I subsequently made changes in my own leadership style. In transforming what I learned from this study to my overall relationship with the teachers in my building, I have adopted a more regulatory stance in order to provide the clarity of purpose that the teachers identified as missing from the in-service situation. However, I did so mindful of the need to establish a vision and create a school culture that is based on common beliefs, norms and values (Grimmett, Rostad & Ford 1992; McLaughlin, 1991). At faculty meetings and grade-level meetings, I described my vision. I also stated my intention, as principal, to shape a school that was more in keeping with my view of how children learn. My actions were consistent with Cooper's (1991) contention that "part of what staff development has to do now is teach people how to re-create environments and how to think about the structures and functions that are right for children" (p. 86). She goes on to state that the process of turning the vision of a school into practice involves challenging team members to "create a vision of what schools should be like as learning environments, and how young people should be activated" (p. 87).

In making these changes in my leadership style, I recognized that I was continuing to have leadership control vested in the principal . We are at this stage presently in my school, but I challenged the teachers to take the risks necessary to join me in developing a common vision. A strong instructional leader needs a clear vision, but it is of little use if that vision is only at the system level (Fullan, 1994). We will need to move on to what Sergiovanni (1987) referred to as leadership density.

> Leadership density refers to the extent to which leadership roles are shared and the extent to which leadership is broadly exercised. In highly successful schools, for example, the line between principal and teachers is not drawn very tightly, and indeed successful principals view themselves as principal-teachers. Teachers assume a great deal of responsibility – they exercise leadership freely. The idea every teacher a leader and every principal a teacher suggests the spirit of the value of leadership density (Sergiovanni, 1987, pp. 121-122).

The outcomes of this study may help to promote leadership density in our school. Information I gleaned from the data supports the involvement of the principal in the learning experiences of the teachers. In the questionnaires and the interviews, the teachers indicated that there were advantages to participating in a school-based in-service course. This is the approach that we have taken with two consecutive in-service courses. These courses were even more meaningful to the staff because they stemmed from building-wide needs that were identified by our Building Leadership Team. However, participation of the principal in school-based learning experiences alone is not sufficient. The culture of the school must also encourage the active participation of all personnel in setting direction and determining outcomes. Teachers must take part in leadership roles that promote and support their own personal professional growth.

In this era of teacher empowerment and professionalism, we have to make some choices. We can continue to maintain a view of instructional leadership that promotes a dependency on the principal, or we can change our view to one in which instructional leadership is shared by all staff members. If we are really serious about improving instructional leadership and not just engaging in token restructuring in response to political pressures, then we must recognize that teachers have strong expectations regarding the role of the principal as instructional leader.

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